

Analysis of young tourists' life satisfaction domains and determinants of overall life satisfaction

Suosheng Wang

suwang@iupui.edu

ABSTRACT

This study explores tourists' satisfaction outcomes and life satisfaction domains, and examines the domains' relative importance in influencing tourists' overall life satisfaction. Seven life satisfaction domains are identified in relation to young Chinese tourists' leisure travel, among which five domains are found to be significant in affecting the tourists' overall life satisfaction. These significant domains, in order of importance, are life satisfaction in work, affection/love, social status and recognition, knowledge enhancement, and leisure and relaxation. No difference is detected about the young tourists' travel-related life satisfaction relating to their demographic variables such as gender, income and marital status. Based on the results, theoretical and managerial implications are recommended.

Keywords: travel satisfaction outcomes; life satisfaction domains; overall life satisfaction; young tourists; China

INTRODUCTION

Life satisfaction is a cognitive, judgmental process, consisting of a global assessment of a person's quality of life according to the individual's chosen criteria together with hedonic aspects (Diener et al., 1999). Life satisfaction can be defined as the degree to which an individual favorably judges the overall quality of his life-as-a-whole (Veenhoven, 1991). Neal, Uysal, and Sirgy (2007) confirm that tourism is an important aspect of leisure life, which is a significant factor in overall life satisfaction. Hobson and Dietrich (1994, p.23) observed that there is an "underlying assumption in our society that tourism is a mentally and physically healthy pursuit to follow in our leisure time" and hence a factor in increasing quality of life. In addition, Neal and Gursoy (2008) find that tourists' level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction during various stages of travel affects their overall satisfaction with travel and tourism services.

As people are becoming more aware of the importance of wellbeing and quality of life, academic research in this area has been growing steadily and rapidly. Recent tourism research has gone onto investigating the links between satisfactory outcomes and life satisfaction (e.g., Neal et al., 1999; 2004). Tourism research on life satisfaction has been mainly guided by goal theory (e.g., Neal, et al., 2007; Sirgy, 2010; Sirgy et al., 2011), which is based on the notion that tourists can experience a higher level of subjective wellbeing if they engage in certain actions to

implement their selected leisure travel goals and engage in actions to experience goal attainment (Sirgy, et al., 2011). There are several key reasons for engaging with the happiness topic. First, the discussions and the research work on happiness help shed light on the subjective value of holiday experiences to tourists. Second, the happiness research helps in better understanding the potential relationship between tourism and mental health (Filep, 2014).

The importance of holidaytaking or tourism has been widely researched especially in terms of motivations. However, the question as to whether taking a holiday does make one happier with the satisfaction of meeting psychological needs through travels has yet to be fully examined (Gilbert & Abdullah, 2004). Such research has mainly focused on tourists in Western countries (McCabe & Johnson, 2013; Pagan, 2015). Other research has focused on elderly tourists' life satisfaction (e.g., Milman, 1998). Relatively, few studies have ever focused on the young tourists' life satisfaction especially in countries other than the well-developed Western countries (Wang, 2017).

Travel outcomes may be perceived differently by an individual in a different culture to construct his or her life satisfaction judgments. More research is therefore needed to better understand the relationship between leisure travel and tourists' life satisfaction. This study is designed to explore how Chinese tourists perceive their leisure travel outcomes, and additionally, how the domains of life satisfaction (e.g., the surrogates of the outcomes) interrelate and contribute to the tourists' overall life satisfaction. Specifically, the purposes of this study include:

1. Exploring tourists' leisure travel related satisfaction outcomes;
2. Identifying the leisure travel related life satisfaction domains;
3. Examining the relative importance of the tourists' life satisfaction domains in determining their overall life satisfaction; and
4. Investigating the impacts of the demographic variables on the life satisfaction determinants.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leisure activities provide opportunities for relaxation, entertainment, and personal development (Dumazedier, 1967). Wilson and Harris (2006) showed that meaningful travel centered around three key themes: a search for self and identity, self-empowerment, and connectedness with others. There is evidence in different studies that positive leisure experiences can induce positive moods (e.g., Hills & Argyle, 1998), thus enhancing the participants' sense of well-being. However, the importance lies both in the amount of time available and the value that people attach to their leisure experiences (Shaw, 1984) and which contributes to their life satisfaction (e.g., Tinsley & Tinsley, 1986).

For instance, outdoor touristic and adventure activities lead to learning experiences (Koseoglu & Doering, 2011). The principles of experiential learning and transformative learning provide a viable connection between travel and education (Stone & Petrick, 2013). Exploring other

cultures and increasing knowledge were among the top motivations for travel (Richards & Wilson, 2003). Pearce and Foster (2007) discovered that travelers reported learning of “generic skills” such as problem solving and interpersonal/social skills; in addition, they gained more general knowledge (e.g., historic and geographic knowledge) and social and cultural awareness. Within experiential learning, content knowledge can lead to personal growth, which can lead to an openness and to more learning (Meyer-Lee & Evans, 2007), and consequently, to one’s happiness and life satisfaction.

Unlike the elderly or retired, full-time employees are often unable to recover sufficiently during short respites from work due to increasingly permeable boundaries between work and home domains, long working hours, working overtime and prolonged physiological activation as a result of pre-occupation with work (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2005). Therefore, a long getaway is longed to recover from work. For employees especially the young people, vacations represent the longest period of temporary absence from work and may constitute a more powerful respite opportunity than a short break (de Bloom et al., 2013). Presumably, as compared with the other age groups (e.g., the younger or older generations), the young full-time workers tend to value more the travel outcomes and benefits that leisure travel can bring them.

The effect of satisfaction with a specific consumption experience (e.g., travel experience) on overall life satisfaction used to be studied within the framework of the bottom-up spillover theory. This theory posits that life satisfaction is functionally related to satisfaction with all of life’s domains and subdomains; and life satisfaction is thought to be on top of a satisfaction hierarchy, which is influenced by satisfaction with life domains (Rapkin & Fisher, 1992; Sirgy et al., 2011). Life satisfaction is measured on two levels: global and specific life domains. The specific life domains include family, friends, home, interpersonal relationships, economic situation, job, leisure, neighborhood, self, services and infrastructure, health, and nation (Gilbert & Abdullah, 2004). Notably, the meanings of the pre-defined life domains seem to be mutually intertwined. In other words, there may exist a collinearity issue among the domains. Given this, previous studies (e.g., Sirgy et al., 2011) did not examine the relative importance of the life domains or subdomains in impacting travelers’ overall life satisfaction.

Being aware of the potential collinearity issue, this study has been framed in the social production function theory (SPF) proposed by Lindenberg (1986, 1991, 1996). The SPF theory assumes that people produce their own cognitive life satisfaction by trying to optimize achievement of universal needs via instrumental goals. The two basic universal needs are the needs for physical wellbeing and social wellbeing, which are met through engaging in activities that satisfy instrumental goal (van Bruggen, 2001). The physical need comprises the components of physical stimulation and comfort, and the social wellbeing comprises the basic goals of status, behavioral confirmation and affection. One expected advantage of applying the SPF theory is that there should be no serious collinearity issue occurring among the identified instrumental goals given their distinctive features of each. Yet, though a popular theory being applied in social studies, SPF has rarely been applied in studying tourists’ leisure travel outcomes and life satisfaction (Wang, 2017).

Notably, previous studies about the impacts of demographic variables on life satisfaction have not been consistent. For instance, demographic variables such as education and income are positively correlated with happiness or satisfaction (Kahneman & Kruger, 2006). Oreopoulos (2003) finds that gender is uncorrelated with life satisfaction and happiness; the effects of age are complex—the lowest life satisfaction is apparently experienced by those who have teenagers at home, and reported satisfaction improves thereafter. Previous studies have found that rank in the income distribution or in one's peer group is more important than the level of income (e.g., Luttmer, 2005). Wilson (1967) showed that demographic factors correlate with life satisfaction. He stated that the happy person is a “young, healthy, well-educated, well-paid, extroverted, optimistic, worry-free, religious, married person with high self-esteem, job morale, modest aspirations, of either sex and of a wide range of intelligence”. Pagan (2015) found significant effects of gender, age, years of education on different domains of life satisfaction, especially in the nondisabled sample. This study will also test how the demographic variables impact young tourists' perceptions of their life satisfaction domains.

RESEARCH METHODS

Given the fact that few studies have ever explored young tourists' travel outcomes and the associations with their life satisfaction, this study aims to focus on young Chinese tourists who mainly have entry-level jobs or low-to-medium wages. Notably in today's China, many young employees are migrant workers coming from China's countryside or underdeveloped areas. Compared with the middle-class or upper-class people who have relatively less life pressure and stress, the baseline young Chinese workers usually spend most of their time in work and have very little time for relaxation. It is considered that this is the group of people with deprived needs in vacations as compared with the other age groups, and on a leisure getaway, their travel outcomes would be expected to produce a higher level of life satisfaction.

Studies on young Chinese tourists' travel-related life satisfaction have rarely been conducted. As a result, one initial step in data collection is to explore the people's satisfaction outcomes aroused from leisure travel. A judgmental sampling technique is used to identify a pool of 56 young people through the referrals of the researcher's friends. These employees are working in various cities, aged in their 20s or 30s. Before conducting the phone interview, an email message was sent out. The principal researcher introduced himself and explained the purpose of the interview, then asked if he or she made a leisure trip within the last 12 months and could recall the travel experience. As a result, 29 people turned out to have made at least one leisure trip in the last 12 months and accepted the invitation for a phone interview.

The phone interview was conducted in May 2014 by the principal researcher who was fluent in both Chinese and English. Each interview lasted for approximately 30-35 minutes, with all the audios being tape-recorded. After a phone interview was started, the interviewer first started with some general questions (e.g., “When did you make the most recent leisure travel?” and “How is the trip in general?”). This allowed interviewees to have time thinking about the most recent leisure trips and consequent effects. Then the interviewer asked, “How may the travel

experience and outcomes have affected your life satisfaction?" There were occasions when an interviewee did not know what to say next about his or her travel outcomes. Given this, the interviewer would provide some aspects for the interviewee to think about, which are in line with the instrumental goals specified in the theory of SPF.

The interviews were transcribed and content analysis was conducted to determine the content codes describing leisure travel outcomes. Previous studies of travel effects or outcomes were used to establish a standard typology of outcomes at each level and these were used in the coding process.

Based on the results of the qualitative assessment, the survey questionnaire was designed for the quantitative assessment. The travel outcomes and life satisfactions were measured using a five-point scale with 1 standing for very negative and 5 for very positive. In addition, demographic and travel behavior related questions are included such as gender, marital status, age, household income, and previous leisure travel experience.

Data were collected through a pen-and-paper survey conducted from September 2014 to November 2014. Data-collecting cities are Shenzhen and Guangzhou in Guangdong Province, Ma'anshan in Anhui Province, Suzhou and Nanjing in Jiangsu Province, and Hangzhou in Zhejiang Province, which are all located in East China. The convenience sampling technique was used in data collection with the research assistants working in these cities. Survey assistants were college students majoring in tourism and friends working in the selected cities. Prior to the survey, the assistants were introduced with the background of the research project and the process of data collection, and were asked to survey young baseline-level employees who had taken at least one leisure travel within the recent year.

As a result, 28% of the completed surveys were collected in Shiqiao Town of Ma'anshan City, Anhui Province. The respondents were either self-employed or part-time jobbers intercepted by the research assistants on the main streets of the town; 15% of the respondents were employees working at an economy hotel chain in Hangzhou City, Zhejiang Province. Data were collected with the assistance of a deputy general manager of the hotel group; 17% of the surveys were collected in the cities of Suzhou and Nanjing, Jiangsu Province. The respondents were mainly retailer workers hired by shop owners or self-employed; 31% were collected by student assistants in Nanshan District of Shenzhen City, Guangdong Province. The respondents were workers in Shenzhen Overseas Chinese Town; the rest of the respondents (9%) were collected in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, in a telecommunication corporation, with the help of an employee working in the company. Altogether, 540 usable surveys were collected.

Descriptive statistics using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 24) was conducted to assess the frequency and central tendency of the leisure travel outcomes. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted for the leisure travel outcome items. Based on the results of the factor analysis, multiple regression analysis is done to determine which factors are salient in contributing to the tourists' overall life satisfaction. The overall life satisfaction has been measured

with the five-item scale developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin (1985). One example of the five items, for instance, is 'in most ways my life is close to my ideal.' Then the independent samples t-tests are conducted to detect perceptual differences of the determining factors identified in the regression analysis between male and female, single and married, and low monthly income (< CNY5,000) versus medium-or-above monthly income (\geq CNY5,000).

RESULTS

The results of the descriptive analyses of the survey data show that 44.3% are males and 55.7% are females; 75.7% are unmarried and 21.9% are married; 62% of the respondents are at the age group of 18-25 years old, 28.9% are 26-30 years old, and 9.1% are 31-40 years old. About household income, 21.3% of the respondents reported a monthly income below CNY2,000 (US\$1.00 is about CNY6.5), 50.6% from CNY2000-5000 per month, 19.1% from CNY5000-8000, and the rest of the respondents (9%) over CNY8000 per month. Regarding the respondents' travel experience, about 71% of the respondents made one domestic trip within the recent year, 29% traveled more than once. For the most recent leisure trip, 93% of the respondents traveled domestically, only 1% traveled long distance to Europe while the rest of them have traveled to nearby East and Southeast Asia destinations such as Thailand and Japan. About travel mode, 33.9% traveled with family members in the recent trip, 12.8% with lovers, 45% with friends or colleagues, and 8.3% by themselves.

The content analysis of the qualitative data reveals 35 leisure travel outcome indicators. As a result of the reliability testing, three items were found not to contribute to the internal consistency and hence were removed and excluded in the consequent data analyses. The mean ratings of leftover 32 satisfaction outcomes range from 2.54 to 4.66 (see Table 1). For instance, the items with the lowest mean values are "Looking for romantic experience en route travel" (2.54), "To improve rapports with business partners for business success" (2.94), "To enhance social network, work or business opportunities." (2.99). Apart from these three, all the other items' mean ratings are bigger than the mid-point '3'. Noticeably, the top-rating items are related with the direct travel experiences such as beautiful scenery, health food, convenient and express transportation, etc.

Table 1 : Leisure outcome indicators and life satisfaction domains

Variables (mean)	Factor loadings							Com.
	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	
Factor 1 – Life satisfaction in travel services								
Healthy food (4.44)	.820							.617
Clean and comfortable accommodation (4.30)	.789							.706
Convenient and express transportation	.761							.698
Satisfactory supporting services								
(e.g. good tour guide and available WIFI)	.665							.632
High level of travel safety and security (4.64)	.458							.572
Hospitable local residents (3.86)	.455							.597
Factor 2 – Life satisfaction in social status and recognition								
Travel is a reflection of increased income (3.32)		.775						.551
Travel is a symbol of life improvement (3.50)		.772						.752
Colleagues and friends speak highly of my travel experience (3.59)		.670						.675
Showing travel experience in social media to get more attention (3.37)		.641						.515
Travel is hailed by family members (3.48)		.593						.412
Travel means a higher-level pursuit to quality of life (3.93)		.531						.525
Travel is an award and recognition to my hard work (3.93)		.440						.633
Factor 3 – Life satisfaction in knowledge enhancement								
Enrich life experience (4.33)			.778					.590
Accumulate life experience in a new place (4.14)			.711					.715
Enhance knowledge, skills and inquiring ability (3.93)			.601					.452
Experience different folklore and culture (4.39)			.452					.625

Factor 4 – Life satisfaction in leisure and relaxation

stay away from routine life (3.96)				.784				.728
stay away from routine place (4.15)				.763				.727
do the things I desire (4.27)				.735				.671
accomplish internal tranquility (4.25)				.692				.653

Factor 5 – Life satisfaction in work

To enhance social network, work or business opportunities (2.99)					.771			.464
To improve rapports with business partners for business success (2.94)					.766			.565
Travel planning and preparation greatly invigorates passion in work (3.50)					.559			.560
A person can fully and vitally engage in work after traveling (3.79)					.737			.544
One's ideas and creativity of work can be inspired while traveling (3.44)					.667			.688

Factor 6 – Life satisfaction in affection/love

To be with children or be pious to parents (4.06)						.734		.667
Enhancing affections with friends or the beloved (4.18)						.730		.561
To meet with old friends or new friends (3.77)						.677		.715

Factor 7 – Life satisfaction in comfortable environment

Stay far away from environmental pollution (4.09)							.807	.694
Enjoy fresh air (4.31)							.663	.661
Escape coldness or hotness (3.51)							.633	.742

% of variance	25.4	12.7	8.9	6.9	5.9	3.8	2.8	
Cumulative variance (percent)	25.4	38.1	47.0	53.9	60.0	64.1	66.9	
Summated Mean	4.28	3.59	4.20	4.16	3.33	4.00	3.97	
Number of items (total=21)	6	7	4	4	5	3	3	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

To detect the scale dimensionality, exploratory factor analyses with the principal component method is conducted. The result of the factor analysis is presented in Table 1. The test statistic for sphericity is large (9613.012) which is statistically significant at 0.001. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy of these variables was 0.938. The communalities range from .412 to .752. As a result, seven factors are extracted, explaining 66.9% of the total variance. Based on the items grouped under each factor, these four factors are labeled as “life satisfaction in travel services” (F1), “life satisfaction in social status and recognition” (F2), “life satisfaction in knowledge enhancement” (F3), “life satisfaction in leisure and relaxation” (F4), “life satisfaction in work” (F5), “life satisfaction in affection/love” (F6), and “life satisfaction in comfortable environment” (F7). Among the factors, Factor 1 – “life satisfaction in travel services” obtains the highest summated mean score (4.28), which is perceived most favorably by the tourists. In turn, the second favorably rated factor is Factor 3 – “life satisfaction in knowledge enhancement” (4.20), followed by Factor 4 – “life satisfaction in leisure and relaxation” (4.16), and Factor 6 – “life satisfaction in affection/love” (4.00). All these factors are favorably perceived, i.e., their mean ratings are bigger than the middle point ‘3’.

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to measure how the identified domains of travel-related life satisfaction predict tourists' overall life satisfaction. As illustrated in Table 2, about 56% of the total variance in the dependent variable is explained by the predicting model. The F-ratio of 136.58 is significant (Prob.< 0.001), indicating that the result of the equation model could hardly occur by chance. The degree of variable collinearity is considered acceptable with the variance inflation (VIF) equal to 1.01 which is less than 10.

Table 2: Significant factors in predicting travel-related life satisfaction

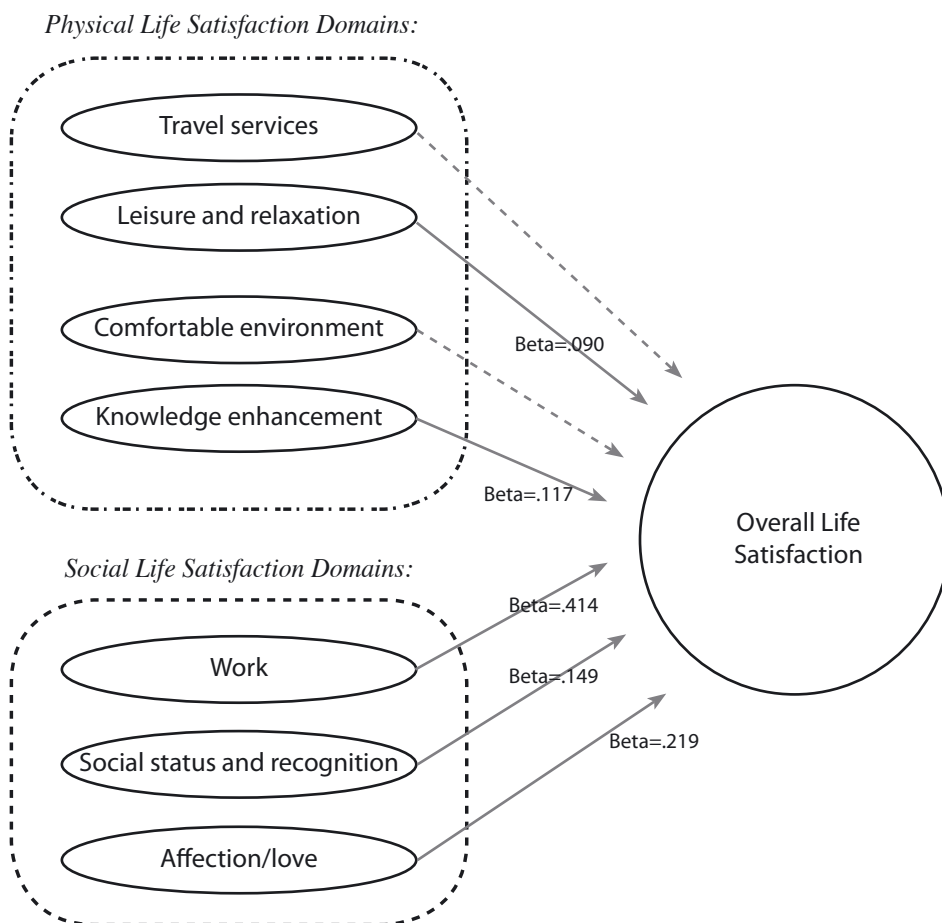
R = .749, R ² = .560, Adjusted R ² = .558, F(5,533) = 136.58				
Variable	B	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.343		10.931	.000
F5	.272	.414	11.723	.000
F6	.156	.219	6.170	.000
F2	.114	.149	3.931	.000
F3	.098	.117	3.207	.001
F4	.070	.090	2.750	.006

Dependent Variable: Travel related overall life satisfaction

Five factors are found to be significant in predicting tourists' overall life satisfaction related to leisure travel (see Fig. 1). The regression model indicates that the most important factor in contributing to the tourists' life satisfaction is Factor 5 – “life satisfaction in work” (Beta=.414), the second important one is Factor 6 – “life satisfaction in affection/love” (Beta=.219), followed by Factor 2 – “life satisfaction in social status and recognition” (Beta=.149), Factor 3 – “life

satisfaction in knowledge enhancement” ($\text{Beta}=.117$), and Factor 4 – “life satisfaction in leisure and relaxation” ($\text{Beta}=.090$). The two insignificant predictors are F1 and F7.

Figure 1: Travel related life satisfaction domains and overall life satisfaction



The remaining significant factors were further examined across the groups of different gender, income and marital status, respectively. Interestingly, the results of the independent-samples t-tests did not show significant differences between most of the demographic groups (see Table 3), and only two tests proved significant on Factor 5 “life satisfaction in work” between males and females, and between less-income and more-income. For these two significant tests, it is found that male tourists are feeling more positive than female tourists, and more-income visitors are more positive than less-income visitors. As for all the other demographic groups, their effects on the remaining significant factors are indistinctive.

Table 3: Results of t-tests

DV	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	t	Sig.
F2	Male	239	3.58	.751	-.188	.851
	Female	310	3.59	.788		
	Less income	387	3.56	.790	-.941	.347
	More income	152	3.63	.722		
	Unmarried	408	3.57	.753	-.476	.634
	Married	118	3.61	.846		
F3	Male	239	4.20	.696	.173	.863
	Female	310	4.19	.699		
	Less income	388	4.18	.718	-.532	.595
	More income	152	4.22	.644		
	Unmarried	409	4.21	.655	1.677	.094
	Married	118	4.09	.840		
F4	Male	239	4.08	.733	-1.862	.063
	Female	300	4.20	.769		
	Less income	388	4.14	.776	-.379	.705
	More income	152	4.17	.703		
	Unmarried	409	4.17	.720	1.156	.248
	Married	118	4.08	.874		
F5	Male	239	3.45	.876	2.922	.004
	Female	301	3.23	.899		
	Less income	388	3.27	.919	-2.219	.027
	More income	152	3.46	.818		
	Unmarried	409	3.32	.860	-.238	.812
	Married	118	3.34	.970		
F6	Male	239	3.99	.790	-.213	.832
	Female	310	4.01	.855		
	Less income	388	4.00	.884	.932	.352
	More income	152	4.00	.659		
	Unmarried	409	4.01	.828	-.654	.513
	Married	118	3.93	.802		

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

Previous studies about leisure travel benefits have mostly focused on elderly people or people in special social groups and from western countries. This study analyzed the perceptions of young Chinese workers' leisure travel outcomes. The mean ratings of the measures indicate that the young tourists are more sensational to what leisure travel could bring them physically. Among the most favorably rated satisfaction outcomes, most of them are physical satisfaction outcomes. Of the social wellbeing related travel outcomes, only two indicators received mean ratings slightly over 4 on the 5-point scale. In other words, the young Chinese people are more concerned about the travel experiences which can bring them more physical life satisfaction.

Seven domains of life satisfaction were identified, among which four are physical life satisfaction domains, i.e., travel, leisure and relaxation, comfortable environment, and knowledge enhancement, and three are social life satisfaction domains which are social status and recognition, work, and affection/love. Of these domains, the satisfaction domain in work is deemed as a unique domain for the young people desiring for success in career, and the life satisfaction for comfortable environment may reflect the people's concern about the pollution being aggravated in the recent decades due to rapid economic growth at the cost of the environment.

Of the seven life satisfaction domains, the domain of life satisfaction in travel received the biggest summated mean (4.28 out of 5), followed by life satisfaction in knowledge enhancement (4.20) and life satisfaction in leisure (4.16), all being part of the physical universal goal. The domains with the lowest summated means are life satisfaction in work (3.33) and life satisfaction in social status and recognition (3.59), indicating the young tourists' perceived life satisfaction in work and social status and recognition is mild. This is the group who might have the busiest working schedule and the heaviest life pressure who, according to Chinese tradition, have to take care of their children as well as their parents. Leisure travel is a good time for them to relax and 'recharge batteries'. In contrast, their satisfaction in work and social recognition from leisure tourism is not as high as the physical pleasure gleaned directly from travel itself.

The results of the regression analysis indicate that the life satisfaction domains of 'work' and 'affection/love' are the first and second most important determinants of the young tourists' overall life satisfaction, followed by the domains of 'social recognition', 'knowledge enhancement', and 'leisure and relaxation'. It is noted that the majority of the respondents in this study were young people with a monthly income less than \$800, indicating that most of them are base-line workers in China, who desire for career success and therefore consider leisure travel very important for becoming more competent and better prepared for their work. The study implies that what really enhances their life satisfaction is the travel experiences and outcomes which invigorate their work passion, inspire their creative ideas, and improve relations with their career partners. This study also indicates that the young Chinese people find it very important to invest in the realization and improvement of affection and social status. Suh, Diener, Oishi, and Triandis (1998) observed that among collectivists, the extent to which one's life accords with the wishes of significant others is more important than the emotions that the person feels in predicting his or her life satisfaction.

Noticeably, the physical domain of life satisfaction in 'travel' receiving the biggest summated mean score is however not a significant predicting factor in the model; in addition, the most important determinants of overall satisfaction are not physical domains but mainly social domains which however received lower summated means. In other words, though the physical domains of life satisfaction obtained relatively bigger summated means, they are less important than the social domains in determining the young tourists' overall life satisfaction. One implication for the government and tourism management is that, to enhance the tourists' overall life satisfaction, more emphasis and efforts should be focused on elevating the young tourists' satisfaction in the social domains.

This study did not spot the demographics' distinct effects on tourists' perceptions of the important life satisfaction domains. The results indicate that the young Chinese travelers have quite consistent perceptions about their travel outcomes and life satisfaction domains due to leisure travel. It is noted that the results may not be quite consistent with the findings of the previous studies (e.g., Kahneman & Kruger, 2006; Oreopoulos, 2003; Luttmer, 2005), indicating that people of different ages may have different views and characteristics in terms of their leisure travel outcomes and travel-related life satisfaction domains.

In summary, this study explored young Chinese people's leisure travel outcomes, their life satisfaction domains derived from the travel outcomes and the relative importance of the domains contributing to their overall life satisfaction. The theory of SPF was applied in the study which proves to be an effective framework in exploring tourists' travel outcomes related to the enhancement of their overall life satisfaction. The identified life satisfaction domains are generally consistent with the findings of similar studies conducted previously by other tourism scholars. While there may always exist some discrepancies among the studies, this proves that human goals and their pursuits for life satisfaction are greatly varied and dynamic, subject to the changes and improvements of their living environments, standards and constraints.

In the context of leisure travel, the young Chinese people seem to be more easily satisfied with the fulfilment of physical life goals than social life goals. Moreover, though their social needs can be relatively harder to accomplish through leisure travel, these needs or goals (e.g., satisfaction domain in work) are more important in determining their overall life satisfaction. Echoing the previous studies (Hag, 2012), this research work further verifies that, for people living at different stages of life, or from different cultures or social groups/classes, there would always exist some special needs or goals pursued by the specific type of people or social group. For the organizations which attach importance to improving people's wellbeing, such special needs or goals should be highlighted and given full attention.

Specifically, this study is informative to China's policymakers and tourism management organizations who care about the young people's morale and life satisfaction. For instance, a good quality and well-organized leisure travel can help fulfil the young Chinese people's physical, social goals, which contributed to their overall life satisfaction. From the government's perspective, an enforced paid leave policy is necessary to guarantee employees' legal rights to take paid

vacations. As for tourism organizations, the tourism programs and services should be designed and provided in a way to help accomplish the young Chinese people's needs – basically, the physical needs in relaxation and knowledge enhancement, and ideally, the social needs of life satisfaction in work, social recognition and affection or love.

Finally, given the limitations of research on social sciences and convenience sampling techniques, more research on young people's leisure travel outcomes should be conducted, not only in China, but also in other countries with different economic and cultural background. It would also be interesting and of merits to conduct similar studies on the other types of people (e.g., elderly senior workers, retired people, and/or aging people), and compare the young people's leisure travel outcomes and life satisfaction domains with these peoples'.

REFERENCES

- de Bloom, J., Geurts, S. A. E., & Kompier, M. A. J. (2013). Vacation (after-) effects on employee health and wellbeing, and the role of vacation activities, experiences and sleep. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 14: 613-633.
- Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., and Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 49: 71-75.
- Diener, E., Suh, E., Lucas, R., and Smith, H. (1999). Subjective Wellbeing: Three Decades of Research. *Psychological Bulletin*, 125: 276-302.
- Dumazedier, J. (1967). *Towards a Society of Leisure*. New York: Free Press.
- Filep, S. (2014). Moving Beyond Subjective Well-Being: A Tourism Critique. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 38(2): 266-274.
- Fritz, C., & Sonnentag, S. (2005). Recovery, health, and job performance: effects of weekend experiences. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 10: 187-199.
- Gilbert, D. and Abdullah, J. (2004). Holidaytaking and the Sense of Well-being. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 31 (1): 103-121.
- Hag, R. U. (2012). Subjective wellbeing of the elderly in Islamabad, Pakistan. Unpublished Dissertation, University of Groningen.
- Hills, P., and M. Argyle (1998). Positive Moods Derived from Leisure and their Relationship to Happiness and Personality. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 25:523-535.
- Hobson, J., and U. Dietrich (1994). Tourism, Health and Quality of Life: Challenging the Responsibility of Using the Traditional Tenets of Sun, Sea, Sand and Sex in Tourism Marketing. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, 3(4):21-38.
- Koseoglu, S., and A. Doering. (2011). "Understanding Complex Ecologies: An Investigation of Student Experiences in Adventure Learning Programs." *Distance Education*, 32 (3): 339-55.

- Lindenberg, S. (1986). The paradox of privatization in consumption. In *Paradoxical Effects of Social Behavior*, eds A. Diekmann and P. Mitter. Physica, Heidelberg/Wien.
- Luttmer, E. (2005). Neighbors as negatives: relative earnings and wellbeing. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 120(3): 963-1002.
- McCabe, S. & Johnson, S. (2013). The Happiness Factor in Tourism: Subjective Wellbeing and Social Tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 41, 42-65.
- Meyer-Lee, E., and J. Evans. (2007). "Areas of Study in Outcomes Assessment." In *A Guide to Outcomes Assessment in Study Abroad*, edited by M. C. Bolen. Carlisle, PA: The Forum on Education Abroad, pp. 61-70.
- Milman, A. (1998). The impact of tourism and travel experience on senior travelers' psychological wellbeing." *Journal of Travel Research*, 37(2), 166-70.
- Neal, J., and D. Gursoy (2008). "A Multifaceted Analysis of Tourism Satisfaction." *Journal of Travel Research*, 47:53-62.
- Neal, J. D., Sirgy, M. J., and Uysal, M. (1999). The Role of Satisfaction with Leisure Travel/Tourism Services and Experiences in Satisfaction with Leisure Life and Overall Life. *Journal of Business Research*, 44(3), 153-163.
- Neal, J. D., Sirgy, M. J., & Uysal, M. (2004). Measuring the effect of tourism services on travelers' quality of life: further validation. *Social Indicators Research*, 69, 243-277.
- Neal, J. D., Uysal, M., and Sirgy, M. J. (2007). The Effect of Tourism Services on Travelers' Quality of Life. *Journal of Travel research*, 46: 154-63.
- Pagan, R. (2015). The impact of holiday trips on life satisfaction and domains of life satisfaction: evidence for German disabled individuals. *Journal of Travel Research*, 54(3), 359-379.
- Pearce, P. L., and F. Foster. (2007). "A 'University of Travel': Backpacker Learning." *Tourism Management*, 28 (5): 1285-98.
- Rapkin, B. D., & Fischer, K. (1992). Framing the construct of life satisfaction in terms of older adults' personal goals. *Psychology and Aging*, 7(1), 138-149.
- Richards, G., and J. Wilson. (2003). *New Horizons in Independent Youth and Student Travel*. Amsterdam: International Student Travel Confederation (ISTC).
- Shaw, S. (1984). The Measurement of Leisure: A Quality of Life Issue. *Society and Leisure* 7(1):91-107.
- Sirgy, M. J. (2010). Toward a Quality-of-Life Theory of Leisure Travel Satisfaction. *Journal of Travel Research*, 49(2), 246-260.
- Sirgy, M. J., Kruger, P. S., Lee, D, and Yu G. B. (2011). How does a travel trip affect tourists' life satisfaction? *Journal of Travel Research*, 50(3): 261-275.
- Stone, M. J. and Petrick, J. F. (2013). The Educational Benefits of Travel Experiences: A Literature Review. *Journal of Travel Research*, 52(6): 731-744.

- Suh, E. M., Diener, E., Oishi, S., & Triandis, H. (1998). The shifting basis of life satisfaction judgments across cultures: Emotions versus norms, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74, 482-493.
- Tinsley, H., and D. Tinsley (1986). A Theory of the Attributes, Benefits and Causes of Leisure Experience. *Leisure Sciences*, 8: 1-45.
- Van Bruggen, A. (2001). Individual production of social wellbeing an exploratory study. ICS, University of Groningen.
- Veenhoven, R. (1991). Questions on happiness: Classical topics, modern answers, blind spots. In F. Strack, M. Argyle, & N. Schwarz (Eds.), *Subjective wellbeing: An interdisciplinary perspective* (pp. 7-26). Oxford: Pergammon Press.
- Wang, S. (2017). Leisure Travel Outcomes and Life Satisfaction: An Integrative Look. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 63, 169-182. DOI Information:10.1016/j.annals.2017.01.009.
- Wilson, E., & Harris, C. (2006). Meaningful travel: Women, independent travel and the search for self and meaning. *Tourism*, 54, 161-172.
- Wilson, W. (1967). Correlates of avowed happiness. *Psychological Bulletin*, 67, 294-306.